

2016

HoB Transfer Agreement
Steering Committee

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DEVELOPING & IMPLEMENTING SYSTEM-WIDE TRANSFER AGREEMENTS IN ONTARIO COLLEGES

The Lessons Learned - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Lessons Learned

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September of 2013 the 24 Ontario Colleges delivering Business programs had agreed to four, System- level Transfer Agreements. These agreements would allow students in specific programming areas, the ability to seamlessly transfer from one college to another college within the same program. Transfers could occur at the completion of year 1 or at the completion of year 2, without academic penalty or impact to completion time.

As this was the first of such agreements in Ontario, this project would serve to implement the 4 college-to-college Business Transfer agreements, engage participating stakeholders and provide a road map for other agreements of this nature.

The original goal of the project was to achieve the implementation through three key milestones, Management, Integration and establishing a method to Maintain/Sustain these agreements.

Management

The primary focus under management of the Pilot Implementation Project was ensuring the equitable, timely implementation of the agreements across the province. It should be well noted, the ONTransfer.ca site at the beginning of this project was in its infancy as it related to Transfer Agreements of this magnitude. At the same time, the Heads of Business HoB, agreements were being forged and signed, ONCAT was developing the ONTransfer.ca Pathways site. Since both were crafted independently of each other, the first goal was to ensure there would be a template for the crafting of future agreements. In addition, the communication of these agreements had been sporadic and required a defined communication framework to ensure all stakeholders were informed of agreements during their development.

Integration

The implementation project, spear headed by the Heads of Business needed to ensure a broad outreach to all stake holders, from Chairs, to Admissions Officers to Pathway Advisors to Program Coordinators. Through college workshops and the development of specific tools like; Curriculum Pathway guides, Presentations, Word documents and ongoing updates, each college began to explore their specific internal processes. Essentially ensuring each college had the tools necessary to interpret and implement the agreements as written.

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Maintain/Sustainability

The ultimate goal for these and other agreements is their long term sustainability. It should be noted that had it not been for the reciprocity and enthusiasm of the Heads of Business, agreements of this nature may not have been forged. It will be that same commitment that will continue to ensure every effort will be taken so that no student will be disadvantaged, should they chose to transfer now and in the future.

In August 2014, a project manager was secured to provide the colleges with a single point of contact, to help ensure consistency in interpretation and implementation of the agreements across all 24 colleges, simultaneously.

However, prior to the colleges' complete understanding of the nuances of the agreements and the implementation hurdles facing them when admitting students, Colleges Ontario and ONCAT announced the signing of these exemplary agreements on November 24th, 2014. This early announcement, necessitated a "Pilot" implementation process that would not be the ideal example for other system –wide pathways.

Throughout the implementation journey, a number of success were achieved; a Communication Framework for College-to-College pathways and the Terms of Reference for the Transfer Agreement Steering Committee were developed and approved. All 24 Business Schools in the Ontario Colleges have greater curriculum transparency. In addition the colleges in general, are better prepared to recognize and implement these and other agreements.

In addition to the successes, a number of hurdles were also uncovered, which if unaddressed will negatively impact the sustainability of these agreements in the long term. Many of these hurdles are beyond the scope of the Heads of Business. Through the documenting of this journey and the Lesson's Learned along the way, recommendations have been made, that if addressed, could serve to assist in the sustainability of these agreements and future development of other agreements.